



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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27 May 2003

### RUS41469.E

Russia: Treatment of gays and lesbians in Yekaterinburg (Ekatrinnburg, Ekatrinnaberg or Yekaterinnaberg) from 1991 to present

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

According to a 19 February 2003 Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty *Newsline* article, in response to the opening of the first "official" gay club, Klon, in Yekaterinburg, two Russian Orthodox priests planned to protest the event by going on a hunger strike (RFE/RL 19 Feb. 2003). Seeking to have the club closed the church created a petition, collecting 1,200 signatures since the club's opening on 4 February 2003 (ibid.). A group called the Orthodox Student Brotherhood picketed the city government office in response to the city's issuance of a permit to the club (ibid.). The Brotherhood, according to a press release from the Yekaterinburg Orthodox eparchy that is quoted in the RFE/RL article, was angered by the attitude of city officials toward the "shameful plan to open a club for gays and lesbians in the center of the city of St. Yekaterina" (ibid.).

A 3 March 2003 Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty *Newsline* report states that the owners of Klon would be closing the club due to the "interpretation by several mass media outlets that the activities of the club have a political character" (RFE/RL 3 Mar. 2003). In an open letter, the local gay rights group Forum "condemned the church and accused it of trying to incite hatred between groups on the basis of sexual preference through its efforts to close the club" (ibid.). Forum stated it would "appeal to judicial and law enforcement authorities about alleged massive violations of citizen's constitutional rights" (ibid.). The report further states that according to Forum "there are 330,000 persons with untraditional sexual orientations in Sverdlovsk Oblast, of whom more than 100,000 live in Yekaterinburg" (ibid.). No further information on the treatment of gays and lesbians in Yekaterinburg from 1991 to the present could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, a CNN 2002 report noted that unlike Moscow, Yekaterinburg has already had two gay pride parades (CNN 3 Aug. 2002).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### References

CNN.com. 3 August 2002. "Russian Gays Face Banning Law."  
<<http://www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/08/03russia.gay/>> [Accessed 26 May 2003]

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). 3 March 2003. *Newsline*. "Church Wins Fight Against Gay Club."  
<<http://www.rferl.org/newsline/2003/03/030303.asp>> [Accessed 26 May 2003]

\_\_\_\_\_. 19 February 2003. *Newsline*. "Orthodox Church Demands Closure of Gay Club."  
<<http://www.rferl.org/newsline/2003/02/190203.asp>> [Accessed 21 May 2003]

#### Additional Sources Consulted

IRB Databases

#### **Internet sites, including:**

Amnesty International

Association HS

British Consulate General, Ekaterinburg

Data Lounge

Excess Petersburg

Ganymedes

Gay.Ru

Human Rights Watch

International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC)

International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHFHR)

International Lesbian and Gay Association, Europe (ILGA)

Krilija

Queer Europe

Regions.ru

Slavic-Eurasian Studies Web

Welcome to Ekaterinburg

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